



City of Seattle
Human Services Department

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 8, 2013

To: Councilmember Nick Licata, Chair
Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee

From: Catherine Lester, Interim Department Director
Jesse Eller, Division Director, Aging & Disability Services

CC: Darryl Smith, Deputy Mayor

Subject: **Senior Center Social Work Services – 2013 Mid-Year Report**

General Overview

Due to an increase in need for social work services, the City of Seattle allocated \$150,000 in 2013 (\$16,666 per center) specifically to address this issue. Some senior centers already had an existing social work program which was expanded through this funding and others used the funds to create a new social work program. Ballard Northwest Senior Center (Ballard NW), Greenwood Senior Center (Greenwood), Pike's Market Senior Center and Food Bank (Pike's Market) and The Senior Center of West Seattle (West Seattle) all had an established social work program while the Central Area Senior Center (The Central), International Drop-In Center (IDIC), Southeast Seattle Senior Center (Southeast) and Wallingford Community Senior Center (Wallingford) did not.

Many centers are utilizing the funds to provide individual counseling sessions for vulnerable elders (Ballard NW, IDIC, Pike's Market, Southeast, South Park, Wallingford, and West Seattle). Individual counseling sessions were provided in clients' homes (Ballard NW, South Park, and West Seattle) or at the Senior Centers (IDIC, Pike's Market, Southeast, Wallingford).

The Central and Greenwood developed new or expanded group sessions tailored to the needs of seniors at their centers. In addition to increased direct client services through individual counseling and group sessions, social workers also developed increased programming and outreach efforts. The social worker is able to develop relationships and enhance the Senior Centers presence in the community.

Program Specifics

Ballard NW Senior Center

Ballard NW had an established social work program which promotes and enhances well-being (mental, physical and social) of seniors and family members in the Ballard, Magnolia and Northwest geographical areas of Seattle. The increased funding allowed Ballard NW's social worker to make an additional 8 home visits, 48 client sessions, and 40 phone contacts so far this year.



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With the additional hours of social work availability, Ballard NW has a noticeable increase in counseling and resource referrals with a greater capability to provide home visits to isolated seniors. The social worker has also expanded other services including the fall prevention program, family caregivers class, and classes focusing on a healthy memory, senior wisdom, and flourishing throughout life. Ballard NW's social worker is also establishing a relationship with Swedish Ballard Hospital to develop and collaborate on a community outreach program for the isolated community elders.

Funding is critical for this senior center as the case load continues to increase and the need for additional home visits continues to rise.

The Central

The Central did not have an existing social work program serving the Senior population, although they had an established Kinship program serving grandparents caring for their grandchildren. With the City funds, The Central hired a social worker in May. The vision of The Central's social work program is to provide a space where a commitment to social justice is visible and where they establish meaningful relationships within their agency and the community by providing culturally relevant services. The Central also has a partnership with the University of Washington, School of Social Work.

In the two months since the social worker was hired, nine seniors were served and three new group classes are being formed – Walking and Talking, Aging and Wellness, and Alzheimer's support group. The Central is very excited to continue the social work program and serve the seniors in their community.

Greenwood Senior Center

Greenwood has a well-established social work program. Their part-time social worker has focused on providing support to individuals experiencing memory loss and their family, friends and caregivers. The social worker provides support groups, family consultations, individual counseling and provides short term and emergency care coordination.

The additional funding allows the social worker to provide seven support groups a month – Adult daughters caring for their mothers, Early stage memory loss (for individuals with dementia), Early stage memory loss for caregivers, Living alone, Well spouse, Parkinson's partners, and Senior adult parents of adult children with mental illness. The social worker is also a key staff member for the Alzheimer's café, a place where those with Alzheimer's and their caregivers are able to meet and socialize with others experiencing similar issues.

Greenwood's social work program is going very well. A participant in a support group stated "I can't thank you enough for including me in your very valuable class. I've learned so much. This class also validated decisions I've made in the past and helped me to see them in a different more positive light."



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International Drop-In Center

IDIC serves Filipino and Asian Pacific Islanders in the greater Seattle area. Prior to City of Seattle funding, IDIC had an informal social work program. Due to cultural and language barriers, elders did not access mainstream services and needed help navigating the system. Staff at IDIC helped their participants when they could.

With designated funding for social work services, IDIC was able to serve 27 individuals and their families. The social worker helps families with immigration and naturalization issues, benefits applications, end-of-life counseling and arrangements, etc. The social worker also works collaboratively with staff from Asian Counseling and Referral Services with referrals so services are seamless and not duplicative.

IDIC is thankful for the funding but projects that the number of cases will increase over the months ahead.

Pike's Market Senior Center and Food Bank

Pike's Market had a very well established social services program prior to City of Seattle funding serving the homeless population in downtown Seattle. The goal of the program is to improve client stability and well-being by helping clients apply for and enroll in government financial and healthcare benefits programs, and coordinating the many steps on the long journey from homelessness to affordable housing.

With the additional City of Seattle funding, the social worker was able to see more clients and assist them with accessing services. With the increase in hours, the social worker was able to help about 45 clients access needed services over the past few months.

The social services program is a signature service for Pike's Market. Social workers are at their capacity and will often need to refer new clients to other service providers for prompt service. Funding is critical for the program so more seniors are able to experience the positive impact of social work services.

Southeast Seattle Senior Center

Southeast had a social worker in the past but due to budget constraints, did not have one on staff when the City of Seattle funding became available. The mission of the social work program at the Southeast is to enhance the health and wellness of aging adults and their family members in the SE Seattle area through care coordination, advocacy, community resource referrals, and cultural competency. The social worker provides counseling, crisis services, and outreach contacts aimed at addressing the needs of seniors.

The social worker was hired in February to provide social work services 12 hours per week. In the past 5 months, the social worker provided 83 center visits, 52 phone contacts, and 3 home visits with center members, community members, and family members. The social worker also organized resource and educational events and gives presentations and workshops to members.



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Although social work services are provided, there are many unmet needs. There are gaps in care that the social worker is not able to address due to limited availability. With increased funding the social worker would be able to increase case load providing more outreach and home visits, group sessions, and additional community connections.

South Park Senior Center

South Park Senior Center did not have an established social work program prior to City of Seattle funding. South Park has a very small Senior Center program with limited funding from the City of Seattle (\$6,487, not including funds for social work services), United Way (\$20,000) and Voluntary contributions (\$4,000). The social workers help seniors with isolation issues, significant difficulties maintaining their households, unemployment, poverty, urgent financial needs, housing needs, cultural adjustment stress, family conflict, and health concerns.

South Park hired two social workers at 5 hours a week each. One social worker speaks Vietnamese and the other is fluent in Spanish. The social workers provided 18 home visits to 10 clients since they were hired in February. The social workers also concentrated efforts on outreach to past center members and home-bound seniors.

The social workers are able to help home-bound elders through home visits but there is a need for more services especially at the center.

Wallingford Community Senior Center

Wallingford did not have an established social work program prior to City of Seattle funding. They hired a social worker in May providing services 10-12 hours per week. The vision for the social work program is that the social worker will provide individual appointments for assessment and counseling services, community referral and resource navigation, as well as reserve time for group facilitation and programming support.

Since the social worker was hired two months ago, she provided 15 social work visits to 10 seniors. She has also developed community connections for collaborations. Wallingford plans to expand their social work program by utilizing a University of Washington School of Social Work advanced MSW intern.

Wallingford is very excited about the potential their social worker has to their agency and community. The benefits to clients are evident and they hope to continue and expand their social work services program.

The Senior Center of West Seattle

West Seattle had an established social work program prior to City of Seattle funding. The social worker provides group sessions, information, home visits, and coordinates a volunteer visitor program. The additional funding purchases 8 more hours of social work services which translated to an additional 8 more home visits.



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With the increased hours, the social worker was also able to expand the volunteer visitor program. The program matches vulnerable elders to volunteers who help with shopping, transportation to medical appointments, minor home repairs, and general friendly visits. Growing the program from 3 volunteers to 16 volunteers, more isolated elders are able to benefit from the program. The social worker manages the volunteers and is able to consult or take on challenging cases. The volunteer visitor program is an avenue to serve more clients through friendly visits and provides a method of screening high risk secluded elders in need.

The social work program provides needed services to home bound elders, those that are not able to attend the senior center. The program is a valuable asset to the community.

Success stories (not center specific)

- 1) LR is beginning to face her progressively worsening hoarding and self-isolating behaviors by making small changes in her own thinking and patterns, and participating more actively in community and family events.
- 2) Mrs. R is an 84 year old woman who lives alone in an apartment with a daughter that lives in California and visits her a few times a year. The client is only driving short distances in the neighborhood, due to her declining vision. She recently fell at home and broke her finger. Her neighbor heard her calls for help, and brought her to the urgent care clinic where they took X-rays, and put an immobilizing soft cast on her right hand. This made the next month very difficult for Mrs. R to care for herself in her apartment.

She called our outreach program for help, and after a home visit and assessment, we were able to match her up with a volunteer who took her to her doctor appointments for follow up. Additionally, we visited with her daily for the first week to help with minor chores, cook meals and generally check in with her to make certain she was doing well at home. We continue to provide volunteer support for friendly visiting and are happy to report she is healing well.